



News from White Haven

Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site educates the American people regarding the lives and legacies of Civil War General and 18th President Ulysses S. Grant, his wife, Julia Dent Grant, the enslaved African Americans and other residents of White Haven.

News from White Haven is a quarterly publication of Ulysses S. Grant NHS. It is also available online by visiting www.nps.gov/ulsg/.

Editorial Staff

Robert Pollock

Chief of Interpretation

Arlene Jackson

Superintendent

Tim Good

Contributors

Chiffontae Ross

Nick Sacco

Terry Orr

Tim Good

Comments? Write to:

Chief of Interpretation

Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site

7400 Grant Road


St. Louis, MO 63123

Telephone

314-842-1867

E-mail

ulsg_interpretation@nps.gov

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ulsg_interpretation@nps.gov.

Rebellion Ended! Grant Victorious!



150 years ago, this year, Ulysses S. Grant accepted the surrender of Robert E. Lee, effectively ending the Civil War. Newspapers, such as Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*, proclaimed the news to a war-weary American people. As we commemorate this monumental event in our country's history, it is important to remember the American Civil War in the context of other civil wars.

During the French Revolution, after the execution of Louis XVI, the victors initiated the "Reign of Terror" (1793-1794) executing over ten thousand of their enemies by the guillotine. Mass executions also occurred during and after the Russian and Spanish civil wars. The Bolsheviks in Russia (1918-1922) and the Nationalists in Spain (1936-1939) killed tens of thousands of their opponents. But in America, the civil war ended differently. Five people were executed; four as a result of the Lincoln Assassination, while the fifth, Henry Wirz,

was the commandant of the Andersonville prisoner camp. Instead of mass executions, the conclusion of the American Civil War was marked by a far different event at a place called Appomattox Court House.

On April 9, 1865, for the last time, the ragtag Army of Northern Virginia marched in formation toward the place where they would have to surrender their weapons. As they approached that location, they passed by rows and rows of Union soldiers. And as they marched by the men in blue, a quiet order was given, and those Union soldiers saluted. These very same men who had been firing upon each other just days before, turned around, and gave each other full military honors, so that the war ended, as James McPherson concluded, not with shame on one side and exultation on the other, but it ended, as Lincoln and Grant wanted it to end, with malice toward none and charity for all.

"Sam" and "Pete": West Point to Appomattox

The park rangers at Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site tell many stories about White Haven's 19th century residents. One lesser known story that surprises some visitors is about one of Julia's cousins—Confederate General James Longstreet. Longstreet and Julia were fourth cousins on the Dent side of the family. "Pete" Longstreet and "Sam" Grant (their West Point nicknames) met as cadets at West Point, possibly through Julia's brother, Fred, who was also at the academy at the time. Grant and Longstreet developed a life-long friendship.

Longstreet graduated in 1842, and was sent to Jefferson Barracks. Grant received the same orders a year later. When Grant arrived, according to Longstreet, he accompanied Grant on his first trip to White

Haven. Both soldiers met their future wives in St. Louis, and when they returned from fighting in the Mexican-American war they were both married as soon as practical. The Longstreets attended the Grants' wedding in 1848. The friendship continued during peacetime, but the two men found themselves



James "Pete" Longstreet

on opposite sides when the Civil War came.

Pete and Sam met at Appomattox the day after the surrender. When Grant spotted Longstreet amongst other surrendered Confederate generals, he asked Longstreet to play a game of cards to recall old days and rekindle their dormant friendship. It prompted Longstreet to think they were "born to be brothers."

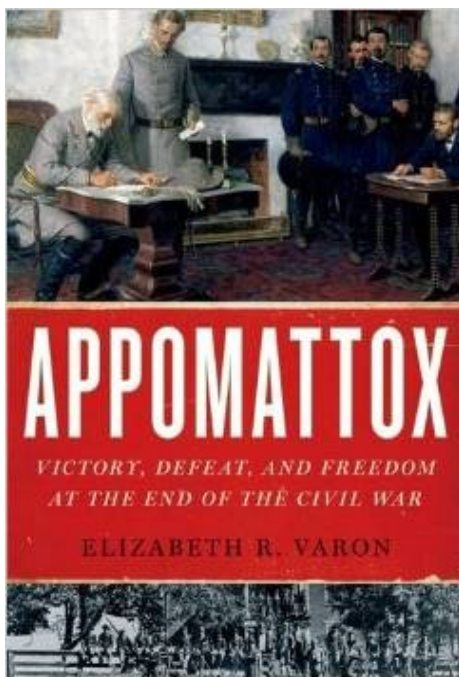
If they became an example of the reunification of the country, and Longstreet embraced a pragmatic approach to Reconstruction, others felt differently. Soon, the meaning of the surrender and the legacy of Appomattox shifted beyond a return to brotherly love to a rebuilding process that has lasted for one-hundred and fifty years.

Elizabeth R. Varon's *Appomattox: A Review*

In her 2014 publication, *Appomattox: Victory, Defeat, and Freedom at the End of the Civil War*, University of Virginia history professor Elizabeth R. Varon presents a fresh interpretation of Robert E. Lee's surrender to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox.

Varon suggests that popular understandings of Appomattox as an apolitical moment of national reunion and healing are shrouded in myth. She argues instead that the meaning of the Appomattox surrender terms was bitterly contested between Unionists and former Confederates in the immediate aftermath of the war. "Grant and Lee," Varon asserts, "positioned themselves at the center of a bitter and protracted contest over what exactly was decided that April day at Appomattox."

Appomattox is split into three parts. Part one starts on the battlefield by recalling Grant's pursuit of Lee's forces in Virginia in early 1865 and continues to the surrender



conference before concluding with the varied responses of Union and Confederate soldiers' to Appomattox. Part two focuses on the civilian response to Appomattox, which was hotly debated and inherently political. Abolitionists and African Americans viewed Grant's terms as a

vindication of emancipation and racial equality. More conservative Unionists believed his terms signaled a cautious approach to Reconstruction that emphasized bringing former Confederate states back into the Union. Former Confederates believed these terms signaled the return of Southern political power and white supremacy.

Part three looks at Grant and Lee's contrasting interpretations of Appomattox. Grant, according to Varon, believed that Appomattox signaled "right over might" and a postwar political vision shaped by the victors. Lee, meanwhile, believed that Appomattox signaled "might over right" and that former Confederates should demand the restoration of their prewar political rights.

Appomattox is a fine publication that sheds new light on a watershed moment in U.S. history.

Spotlight on the Park: Student Essay Contest

Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site is calling on teenage historians to help commemorate General Grant's victory at Appomattox. The historic site is now accepting essays that address the theme "U.S. Grant and the Enduring Legacy of Appomattox." Essays will be reviewed by the staff. Authors of the essays which best convey this legacy will be invited to share their essay during a special event on Saturday, April 11, 2015.



Submission guidelines:

Deadline –March 23, 2015

Essays must be no longer than 1,500 words for middle school students and no longer than 2,500 words for high school students.

No student may submit more than one essay.

Include full student name, school name, and e-mail contact information (student or teacher e-mail is acceptable).

Essays in PDF format may be sent via e-mail to nick_sacco@nps.gov or a hard copy may be mailed to Ulysses S. Grant NHS, 7400 Grant Road, St. Louis, MO 63123.

For possible questions to consider for the essay see the park website at: <http://www.nps.gov/ulsg/forkids/appomattox-essay-contest.htm>

For additional questions regarding the contest please contact the park staff at (314) 842-1867.

The Worst For Which A People Ever Fought

In 1885, as the end of his life fast approached, Grant reflected on the scene of his greatest triumph. From The Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant:

When I had left camp that morning I had not expected so soon the result that was then taking place, and consequently was in rough garb. I was without a sword, as I usually was when on horseback on the field, and wore a soldier's blouse for a coat, with the shoulder straps of my rank to indicate to the army who I was. When I went into the [McLean] house I found General Lee. We greeted each other, and after shaking hands took our seats. I had my staff with me, a good portion of whom were in the room during the whole of the interview.

What General Lee's feelings were, I

do not know. As he was a man of much dignity, with an impassible face, it was impossible to say whether he felt inwardly glad that the end had finally come, or felt sad over the result, and was too manly to show it.

Whatever his feelings, they were entirely concealed from my observation; but my own feelings, which had been quite jubilant on the receipt of his letter, were sad and depressed. I felt like anything but rejoicing at the downfall of a foe who had fought so long and valiantly, and had suffered so much for a cause, though that cause was, I believe, one of the worst for which a people ever fought, and one for which there was the least excuse. I do not question, however, the sincerity of the great mass of those who were opposed to us.

Kids' Corner: Appomattox Mix and Match

Most people can identify Generals Grant and Lee in Keith Rocco's famous painting, "The Surrender." There were many other people involved in the events at Appomattox in 1865. With your parents' permission, pay a visit to Appomattox Courthouse National Historical Park's website at: www.nps.gov/apco and see if you can match the figures on the left to the statements on the right.



U.S. Grant

Wrote official ink copy of the terms

Robert E. Lee

In charge of the Federals at the stacking of arms

Joshua Chamberlain

Lee's Aide de Camp

John B. Gordon

Commander of Confederate Armies

George A. Custer

In charge of the Confederates at the stacking of arms

Ely S. Parker

Commander of Union Armies

Charles Marshall

Enslaved person killed by army fire at Appomattox

Hannah Reynolds

Captured Lee's supply trains on April 8, 1865



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Upcoming Events

- March 14 – Eleanor Roosevelt portrayed by Susan Marie Frontczak, 10am & 1pm
- March 28 – John Adams portrayed by Sam Goodyear, 10am & 1pm
- April 7 – Polling Place
- April 11 – Appomattox Commemoration, Student Essay Readings, times tba.
- April 18 – Calvin Coolidge portrayed by James Cooke, 10 am & 1pm
- April 25 – Jr Ranger Day
- May 2 – Storytelling Festival, Storytellers in Theater at 10 am, 11 am, 2pm & 3pm

Did you know?

In January 1891, speculators purchased the McLean House where the historic surrender had taken place. Initially, they planned to move it to Chicago as an exhibit at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. A later option was to move the house to Washington, D.C. and charge entrance fees.

Measured drawings including elevations and materials specifications lists were produced. The house was dismantled and packed for shipping, but due to

cash flow and legal problems the plan was never brought to fruition. The house sat dismantled in piles, prey to vandals, collectors, and the environment for fifty years.

Appomattox Court House National Historical Monument was created by Congress on April 10, 1940. In February, 1941 archeological work was begun at the site. Historical data was collected, and architectural working plans were drawn up to begin the meticulous reconstruction process. The whole project was

was brought to a swift stop on December 7, 1941 with the bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japanese forces causing the United States entry into World War II.

Reconstruction of the house resumed after the war and on April 9, 1949, the McLean House was opened by the National Park Service for the first time to the public.

Source: <http://www.nps.gov/apco/mclean-house.htm>